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Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, October 19, 2022

Two Men Sentenced for Nationwide Scheme to Steal Social Media Accounts and Cryptocurrency

Two Massachusetts men were sentenced today for an extensive scheme to take over victims' social media accounts and steal their cryptocurrency using techniques such as "SIM swapping," computer hacking, and other methods.

Eric Meiggs, 24, of Brockton, was sentenced to two years and one day in prison. Declan Harrington, 22, of Beverly, was sentenced to two years and seven days in prison.

According to court documents, Meiggs and Harrington targeted executives of cryptocurrency companies and others who likely had significant amounts of cryptocurrency and those who had high value or "OG" (slang for Original Gangster) social media account names. Meiggs and Harrington conspired to hack into and take control over these victims' online accounts so they could obtain things of value, such as cryptocurrency. They used an illegal practice known as "SIM-swapping" and other techniques to access, take control of, and in some cases steal cryptocurrency from, the accounts.

In "SIM swapping", cybercriminals convince a victim's cell phone carrier to reassign the victim's cell phone number from the SIM card (Subscriber Identity Module card) inside the victim's cell phone to the SIM card inside a cell phone controlled by the cybercriminals. Cybercriminals then pose as the victim with an online account provider and request that the provider send account password-reset links or an authentication code to the SIM-swapped device now controlled by the cybercriminals. The cybercriminals can then reset the victim's account log-in credentials and use the log-in credentials to access the victim's account without authorization, or "hack into" the account.

Meiggs and Harrington targeted at least 10 identified victims around the country. Members of the conspiracy allegedly stole approximately \$330,000 in cryptocurrency from these victims. Meiggs allegedly took control of two victims' "OG" accounts with social media companies.

Assistant Attorney Kenneth A. Polite, Jr. of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Rachel Rollins for the District of Massachusetts, and Special Agent in Charge Joseph R. Bonavolonta of the FBI Boston Field Office made the announcement.

The FBI's Boston Field Office investigated the case, with assistance from IRS Criminal Investigations.

Trial Attorney Mona Sedky of the Criminal Division's Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Seth Kosto for the District of Massachusetts Senior prosecuted the case.

Topic(s):

Cybercrime

Component(s):

Criminal Division

Criminal - Criminal Fraud Section
Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).
USAO - Massachusetts

Press Release Number:
22-1128

Updated October 19, 2022